



**MAIN LIBRARY
CATAWBA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
115 West C Street
Newton, NC 28658**

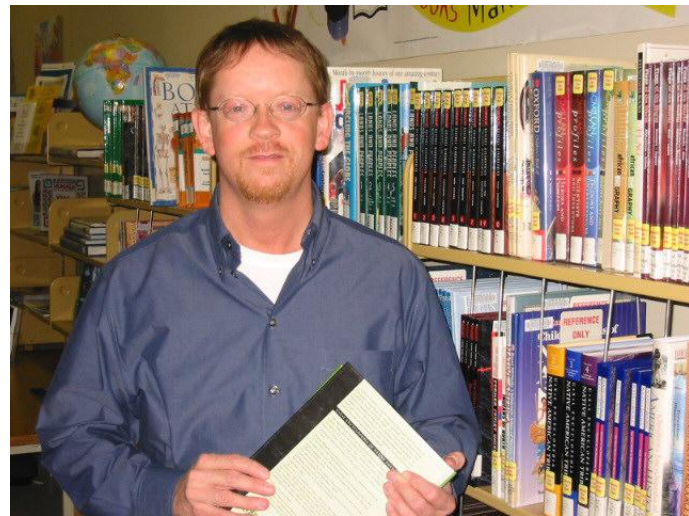
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Claremont like family to library manager

CLAREMONT—Two years on the job as Claremont Branch Library manager, Rich Haunton feels right at home.

Like his counterparts at other locations of the Catawba County Library System, he knows many of his patrons by name. Helping them, of course, is his mission.

“The library is lifeline to many of the folks,” he said. Whether it’s helping patrons find a book or passing out tax forms, he sees the library’s role as a vital one. Not only is the library a place to pick up a DVD for entertainment, it’s a place to search the Internet for a new job, get homework help and answers to other questions. “I want to give patrons personal service and make them feel comfortable about the library,” he said. “Librarians are in a great position to make a positive difference.”



Haunton is no stranger to literature. Born in Savannah, GA, Haunton grew up the son of educators (his father was a college history professor). He earned his undergraduate degree in political science and communication studies at UNC-Greensboro. “Book work” came naturally. He became involved with the Lenoir-Rhyne College Visiting Writers Series early on and spent a total of 14 years in local book retailing before he entered graduate school and joined the staff of Gaston County Public Library.

Wishing for work closer to home, he applied for the Claremont library position in 2006.

“In the book business, every day is like Christmas. There’s always something new,” he said.

His patrons run the gamut of literary tastes, though many prefer best-sellers, audio books and DVDs. But all of the patrons appreciate their local connection to the county library system. Founded in 2002 through efforts of local citizens, the Claremont branch is home to a Friends of the Library group that has brought such notables as Rick Bragg and Sonny Brewer to town. The Friends group remains active and will hold a book sale on May 3.

In his off hours, Haunton enjoys nonfiction—everything from politics to dogs to memoirs. He particularly enjoyed the Frank McCourt trilogy and prefers fiction grounded in reality. A recent favorite: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini.

He and nine-year-old daughter, Annie, live near Hickory.

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